

## Six primary delusions

English: six primary delusions

Tibetan: རྩ་ཉན་བླ་གྲུག་ - *Tsa-nyoen drug* (*Tsa*[-wa] = root/primary/fundamental, *Nyon*[-mong] =

delusion/affliction/afflictive emotion/disturbing emotion/negative emotion/destructive emotion/obscuring emotion, *drug* = six)

Besides the root ignorance there are numerous other delusions. The scriptures talk of 84,000 different types which is why it is said that Shakyamuni Buddha gave 84,000 different teachings in order to counteract those 84,000 delusions.

There are different ways to categorize delusions. Vasubhandu in his ***Abhidharmakosha (Treasury of Knowledge)*** describes six primary delusions and twenty secondary ones

The six primary delusions are:

1. attachment
2. anger
3. arrogance
4. ignorance
5. (afflictive) doubt
6. wrong view

The first five delusions are called the *five non-views*. The sixth delusion, wrong view, can be further divided into five distinct types of wrong view, called the *five views*. This way of subdividing wrong view into further five types leads to another way of categorizing delusions into ten (the *five views* and the *five non-views*) which are also described in Vasubhandu's ***Abhidharmakosha (Treasury of Knowledge)***:

The ten delusions are:

- |   |   |                       |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1. attachment                                 | } | <i>five non-views</i> |
| 2. anger                                      |   |                       |
| 3. arrogance                                  |   |                       |
| 4. ignorance                                  |   |                       |
| 5. afflictive doubt                           |   |                       |
| 6. view of the transitory collection          | } | <i>five views</i>     |
| 7. view holding to extremes                   |   |                       |
| 8. esteeming unworthy views                   |   |                       |
| 9. esteeming mistaken morality and asceticism |   |                       |
| 10. wrong view                                |   |                       |

### 1. Attachment

English: attachment, desire, lust

Tibetan: རྩ་ཉན་ཆགས། *Doe-chag*

Attachment is a mental factor that focuses on an object we consider to be a source of pleasure, such as a car, and either exaggerates the car's positive qualities or superimposes positive qualities the car does not possess. While apprehending those qualities, attachment craves for, and becomes attached to the car.

Regarding the generation of attachment, its root is ignorance apprehending the inherently existent "I", the inherently existent car, or the inherently existent positive qualities of the car. Those misperceptions then induce other wrong perceptions such as the awareness that perceives the car as being permanent, as being in the nature of happiness, or as being flawless, which in turn lead to the mind that exaggerates the car's positive qualities or superimposes positive qualities the car does not possess. The latter awareness is not attachment yet, for craving is still to arise.

The mental factor that craves for and becomes attached to the car, *while* exaggerating the car's positive qualities or *while* superimposing positive qualities the car does not possess, is attachment.

The arising of attachment is quite different to the arising of, for instance, anger. Anger is impulsive and explosive but usually ebbs away quickly. Attachment on the other hand, arises slowly; there is a gradual process of becoming attached to an object. Attachment craves its object, attaches to it and fuses with it, making it very difficult to separate from the object once the mind becomes attached. This is why attachment is compared to a piece of cloth that is stained with oil. The oil is absorbed by the cloth, spreads into it, and is thereby difficult to remove.

Furthermore, the stronger the attachment, the stronger is the sense that we cannot find happiness if we are separated from the object. This feeling is particularly strong regarding attachment to another person. Depending on the intensity of the attachment to the other person there is the fear that we may be separated from them, there is jealousy when they spend time with someone else, and anger when they leave us.

## **2. Anger**

English: anger, aversion, hostility

Tibetan: རྩོལ་ཆོག་ *Khong tro*

Anger is a mental factor that focuses on an object that we consider to be a source of displeasure. This source of displeasure can be another sentient being, an unpleasant situation, or a disease etc.

In the case of being angry with another person, anger focuses on that person and exaggerates their negative qualities or superimposes negative qualities they do not possess. While apprehending those qualities anger cannot bear the person and wants to harm them.

Regarding the generation of anger, its root is ignorance apprehending the inherently existent "I", the inherently existent person who is the object of anger, or the inherently existent negative qualities of that person. Those misperceptions induce the mind that exaggerates the person's negative qualities or superimposes negative qualities the person does not possess. The latter awareness is not anger, for the wish to get rid of them or to harm them has not arisen yet. Rather, anger is the mental factor that wants to get rid of the person or wants to harm them, *while* exaggerating the person's negative qualities or *while* superimposing negative qualities the person does not possess.

Anger is a delusion that leads to a wide range of different emotions such as resentment, ill-will, fury, irritation, rage, hatred, aggression, rancor, spite, etc. It is considered a particularly harmful affliction because it unsettles the mind more than other afflictions and has the power to destroy a lot of *root virtue* or positive karma we have accumulated over many lifetimes.

## **3. Arrogance**

English: arrogance, pride, conceit

Tibetan: རྩལ་ལྷོ་ *Nga-gyael*

Arrogance is a mental factor that focuses on oneself and exaggerates one's good qualities or superimposes good qualities one does not possess. While apprehending those qualities one feels conceited and superior to others. Through superimposing superiority upon oneself while superimposing inferiority upon others, arrogance elevates one.

Arrogance is rooted in the ignorance that apprehends an inherently existent "I" and in the ignorance that apprehends the inherent existence of one's own good qualities.

It creates a lot of unhappiness especially when there is evidence that the image we have of ourselves and of our positive qualities is distorted and not in accordance with reality. Furthermore, it can be a great obstacle to deepening our understanding and to increasing our good qualities.